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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002646

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/11/2026  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: PM ERDOGAN VISITS DIYARBAKIR: MORE MODERATE  
RHETORIC, CONTINUED STANDOFF

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, for reasons 1.4 (b)  
) and (d).

11. (U) This is an AmConsul Adana message.

12. (SBU) PM Erdogan returned to Diyarbakir on May 7, for the first time since the March street unrest and since his August 2005 speech in which he declared that Turkey had "a Kurdish problem." He was in the city to attend the Diyarbakir provincial Justice and Development Party (AKP) internal elections. The PM's remarks were more moderate than the nationalistic rhetoric on Kurdish issues he had spouted in the wake of the March Diyarbakir rioting. Erdogan stressed the need for Turkey's citizens to rally around national solidarity, avoid ethnic struggles, and refuse to allow the PKK to manipulate impressionable youth in Turkey's southeast region.

13. (C) The AKP election itself was a sideshow; incumbent provincial chairman Abdurrahman Kurt won an uncontested re-election. Kurt told us the Diyarbakir AKP establishment had rallied around the PM's message, claiming attendance at the rally of almost 80,000, which would be a significant AKP showing in the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party's (DTP) political stronghold. Human rights attorney Sezgin Tanrikulu estimated the crowd at a more moderate but still respectable 20,000. Tanrikulu said that PM Erdogan did not further irritate most Kurds in the city, who see his rhetoric as tone deaf. His speech did, however, confirm in local Kurdish minds that the PM appears to have forgotten his August 2005 speech promising greater democratization to address the region's problems. (Comment: More likely is that the up-tick in PKK violence and the March rioting combined to sideline the PM's earlier remarks. End comment.)

14. (SBU) Erdogan's brief visit to the city continued the icy standoff between the GoT and DTP. The PM, faced in April 2006 with a request by DTP co-chair Ahmet Turk for a meeting to address the southeast agenda, replied then that GoT officials would only meet with the DTP once the pro-Kurdish party publicly declared the PKK a terrorist organization. DTP has not done so (it has condemned recent violence). Arriving at the Diyarbakir airport, Erdogan briefly greeted Diyarbakir DTP mayor Osman Baydemir but declined any substantive discussion with him. Local press also reported that security officials barred from the airport other DTP regional mayors, most of whom traditionally would join in

welcoming a Prime Minister.

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